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ABSTRACT

In-depth interviews with eight teachers who consistently and successfully developed individualized, personalized classrooms are reported. The object of this investigation was to determine how these teachers perceive the teaching and learning process and how they view themselves and their development as teachers. The teachers varied in their teaching experience and represented a cross section of elementary school grade levels, but all had in common that they used individualized personalized teaching skills. A series of categories about teaching and teaching styles was developed from the data collected. These categories are presented in different sections, focusing on the teachers' goals, their descriptions of their teaching styles, and their own personal development. An analysis of the data from the interviews is made in each section, followed by a summary of conclusions and implications. (JD)

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A STUDY OF INDIVIDUALIZED, PERSONALIZED TEACHING*

By

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Introduction

A vivacious, talented teacher in her late twenties, Mary Bradley is an unusually gifted teacher. Mary's classroom is always alive with interesting activities and productive discussion. Children are busily working on a variety of tasks, while Mary is working with one, then another student. Early in the morning children will be sitting close together, sharing ideas, discussing the days' events, focussing on a classroom problem. Most of Mary's daily classroom routine consists of times when children are working on their own or in small groups, independently and interdependently learning. Mary is there when needed to guide, to solve problems between students, to encourage and persuade a student to do some work, and to help students follow the rules and routines.

Mary's classroom is unusual, because it is a consistently successful individualized, personalized classroom. It is a classroom where children work independently, according to their levels of abilities and needs. There is rarely a sense of disorder, yet children are engaged in a variety of tasks at the same time. Often she can be found working with some students while others are working on their own.

Successfully developed individualized, personalized classrooms can be found scattered throughout schools and school districts. They are not hard to find, but one must search for them, because they exist quietly, often hidden away in some corner of the school. They come to my attention when teachers I know tell me about them, or when teachers come to me looking for a graduate teacher education program. When I

visit such classrooms, I am struck by their consistent pattern and their apparently productive routines. Often what appears to be a successful and productive classroom does not result in significantly higher achievement test scores -- that is, the children in these classrooms do not always achieve significantly better in reading and math than students in other classrooms. Yet one feels that the classroom atmosphere, routines, and activities are producing some kind of significant change in children, perhaps unmeasured by these tests.

While it is useful to observe such classrooms in action, it is also important to focus on the teachers in these classrooms. These teachers are unusual, in that they appear to be gifted in their ability to consistently develop individualized, personalized classrooms. How do these teachers perceive the teaching and learning process? What makes them able to develop such classrooms? How do they decide what they will do in classrooms and how they will do it? This study is an attempt to discover how such teachers view the teaching and learning process, view themselves and their development as teachers, view children. The purpose of the study is to discover if there are any common characteristics in thoughts, ideas, and descriptions of the styles of these teachers that could help to explain their ability to successfully implement such classrooms.

The study consisted of eight in-depth interviews with teachers who consistently and successfully implement individualized, personalized learning styles in their classrooms. Six of the eight teachers were selected on the basis of informal observations conducted over a period of years by the investigator. There was no formal coding done, but I was often able to observe that these teachers consistently had children

working in individualized, personalized classroom settings. Two other teachers were recommended by trusted colleagues who had observed them and worked with them over a period of years.

The teachers varied in their teaching experience and represented a cross section of elementary school grade levels (K - 6), but all of them had in common that they used individualized personalized teaching styles. Several of these teachers had developed special programs in buildings located near, and administered by, a local Philadelphia public school. Others taught in self-contained public school classroom settings. Although some classes averaged approximately twenty-five students per class, most were over thirty, typical for a Philadelphia public school class. Some teachers had the same students for one year only. Other teachers had students for two, or even three years, and this varied with their schools and programs. All of the teachers were experienced, ranging from a minimum of three years teaching experience to more than ten years. Although all of the teachers taught in inner city Philadelphia settings, some teachers worked with children of almost exclusively low socio-economic status. Some of the teachers had all or nearly all black students; others had all or nearly all Puerto Rican students, and still others reflected a variety of races.

The interview questions were designed to encourage these teachers to focus on their thoughts and ideas about teaching, and to focus on themselves as teachers. They were asked to define individualized, personalized teaching. They were asked to explain what their goals were for their students. A set of questions was designed to help them focus on their classrooms, in terms of routines, activities, structure, decisions, planning and the like, and also to focus on their classrooms

at different points in time during the year. The teachers were asked to focus on individual children in some detail. They were also asked to explain the influences that most affected their teaching styles. Finally, they were asked questions designed to get at some of their general thoughts and ideas about teaching that may not have been developed through the other questions, such as "what would be an ideal teaching day for you?" and "What advice would you give to a new teacher?". A summary of the questions is presented at the end of this essay. The interviews generally lasted for more than one hour.

After the interviews were completed the resulting tapes from the interviews were transcribed. The investigator then examined the interviews looking for statements that represented categories about teaching and teaching styles. A series of categories were developed from the data.[1] These categories will be presented in a number of different sections, focussing on the teacher's goals, their descriptions of their teaching styles, and their own personal development. An analysis of the data from their interviews will be made in each section, followed by a summary of conclusions and their implications.

Teaching Goals

Each of the interviewed teachers were asked to state what were their teaching goals. Their answers reflected a variety of goals. The most common goal, expressed by five of the eight teachers, indicated concern

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1. The format used for this analysis followed a naturalistic field study approach for developing concepts and theory found in B. G. Glaser and A. L. Straus, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualititative Research. Chicago: Aldine Press, 1967. See also G. J. McCall and J. L. Simmons, ed., Issues in Participant Observation. Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley, 1969.

for the development of a sense of "personal adequacy" among the students.[2] As several teachers expressed it:

> One of the main things I hope to do is to give them a feeling of self-worth and self-confidence because so few of them seem to have that...
>
> .... It is kind of like that you want all of them to know that they know they have certain strengths and you try to help them build them and they can build them....
>
> .... Now, in terms of kids learning is the sense of I'm incapable and I guess my major goal is giving kids an opportunity to point out to themselves how great they really are...

The importance of this goal for these teachers is probably developed from their analysis of their students, most of whom come from inner city homes and share a sense of failure and inadequacy in their lives. As one teacher put it:

> .... People keep telling them they are dumb. They give themselves opportunities to show themselves in dumb ways, putting them on the spot, expecting them to know things when they haven't been explained...The kids have not had the opportunity to attack their inner ability -- there is no doubt about that...

Thus they see an important part of their job as creating success for these children and giving them a sense that they can succeed:

> "It is important to build up their ego and I think that you can't build up their ego unless they do something, and it has to be based on some competency that they really have and not on some'you're good because you're great or great because you're good'...

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2. The term "personal adequacy" was borrowed from a humanistic psychology perspective suggested in Arthur Combs, Anne Cohen Richards and Fred Richards, Perceptual Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

A second goal, "self-expression", was stressed by several of the teachers. A variety of expressive activities was developed by most of the teachers, such as arts and crafts activities, writing activities, oral speaking, reading, etc. One teacher, for example, explicitely mentioned this goal and how it developed from her experience with young children:

> Because I know that from the kindergarten experience, that what the kids had lost was something that was very valuable, not only for their self-esteem, but for their whole selves, and for their ability for them to learn in every area, that they lost the ability to be expressive. They had been made to think that what they could do with their hands was not valuable and not right... basically what I did was show the kids that their own expression was valuable and built on that and this is what hadn't happened for these kids...

Another teacher explored her expressiveness goal by describing the need for a variety of activities:

> ....Because I was a new teacher....I....got a room that was an old storage closet. Nothing horrible happened except as the year progressed I was saying things to the principal like "These kids need clay and these kids need sand and they need more art and paint and drawing"... It just became more and more clear to me that they needed that kind of experience and they were kids that could talk, I mean they could obviously talk, but they didn't. I just knew that keeping them down listening to me all day that they weren't going to learn to talk...

The development of oral and other forms of self-expression became important goals for her, as well as for other teachers. The use of a variety of modes of self-expression was also mentioned as a way to develop the whole personality of the child and to develop their self-esteem and feelings of personal adequacy.

A third goal, mentioned by all the teachers, was the development of basic academic skills. They continually in their classroom practices and in their goals emphasized the learning of basic reading skills, comprehension, writing, mathematics skills, and so on. Generally, their goals coincided with those of most teachers in the development of basic skills, but their differences were over the methods for achieving these goals, as we shall discuss later.

A fourth goal, both explicitely and implicitely stated by most of the teachers, was helping children take responsibility for their own learning and becoming more independent learners. One teacher, for example,put it this way:

> I set up the classroom so that the children can come in and work completely without me. As soon as they walk in the door, they know what their activities are for the morning. They have independent work to do....We talk about, how do you think you have done, what is it that you want to learn today, what do you think your parents would want you to do, that they have learned a task and want to learn another...It is really nice to see them seeing their own progress...Like Dina, when she learns something she bubbles and says I want to learn how to do it or then she goes off into the next task and she struggles with it a little bit then she learns how to do it and she is off to the next...children working independently instead of them always coming over to you...

Most of the teachers, in their descriptions of classroom life, discussed the development of independence and personal responsibility as a gradual process throughout the year. The stress of these teachers was on classroom structures and practices that led students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, as we shall see later on in this essay.

Paradoxically, a fifth goal emphasized by many of the teachers was interdependence, helping students learn to work together and to take responsibility for each other. Here is how one teacher expressed this goal:

> ...I seem to have more success with a large group, because within a large group people have an obligation to help one another...I expect everyone to feel responsible for anyone who is not making it. Therefore, I allow for the kids to find ways to help... there is an idea that is most attractive to me and that is the idea I have a large extended family so that all the experiences I describe are taking place in an atmosphere where hopefully people are supported in giving help and feel some committment...

Other teachers emphasized getting the children comfortable in working with each other, getting them to help each other -- in other words, building a sense of interdependence and group responsibility. There was an emphasis on cooperative learning.

These five goals -- developing a sense of personal adequacy and self esteem, self-expression, basic academic skills, independent learning and interdependent learning -- were the most common goals described by these teachers.

There were also potential conflicts over goals and differences and changes in goals based on diagnosis of the children. Many of these teachers shifted their goal priorities because of their analysis of the needs of children. In one case, this conflict was discussed in some detail. One teacher was unable to focus the greater part of class energies and time on academic learning and develop independence because the students needed to learn the basic skills of working together:

> ...The last class I had for two years and my goal for them was basically that they could get along with other people. They knew at the end, when they walked out of here, that they were able to deal with an adult, that they were able to deal with each other, to be really able to deal -- not to go past somebody and thump him on the arm or put tacks on their seat or do all the things that I saw them do in the beginning. Academically, a lot of things took a second seat in that case because their socialization to me was so bad that they had no respect for themselves or any body and that took top priority to everything else. I built in all the academics around the fact that in everything they did they had to learn to cooperate with one another...

Thus, goals did not exist in a vacuum. Rather, for this teacher and for most of the others, priorities of goals were established as they worked with and learned about their students.

Descriptions of Teaching Styles [3]

The Individualized, Personalized Classroom

The terms "personalized, individualized" teaching and learning are used here to characterize these teacher's style of teaching. When they were asked what personalized, individualized learning meant to them, they tended to give a variety of answers. However, their answers suggested a focus on "meeting the needs" of individual children in diverse ways. A representative answer suggests that classrooms should "...make some part of the lesson important to each child, to give each child some sense of feeling that this lesson is important to them... "Many other answers were given, among them:

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3. The descriptions of complex teaching styles suggested by these teachers were generally found to be consistent with informal observations conducted over several years.

1. fitting a scheme of activity to a child's interests;
2. getting to know children before learning takes place;
3. allowing children to have a say in what goes on in the classroom;
4. giving children choices;
5. having "real" experiences for children, such as with manipulative materials;
6. having children work at individual rates;
7. having the same goal for each child but making some part of the lesson important for each child;
8. allowing children to be creative;
9. allowing children to work independently.

Thus the term individualized, personalized learning allowed for a wide variation and leeway among these teachers, indicating diversity in classroom practice and styles of teaching. However, within this diversity were a number of common elements that seemed to form a core pattern of teaching and learning. It is to these commonalities that we shall address ourselves below.

The Complex Classroom

The most common element among these teachers was the complexity of their classrooms. Classroom organization and structure indicated complex schedules, with children moving in and out of individualized, small group, and large group activities. Activities shifted according to plans and changing plans. Rooms were complex, with tables, centers, homemade furniture, corners, nooks and crannies as exemplified by two teacher's partial descriptions of their rooms:

> Against one side of the room, we have six or seven desks and when they are finished with their work they go to that area with their free games...There is a corner in the back of the room, we call it a library corner and that is where they go to do their quiet work...There is a sink area and a painting area...There is also a cabinet where they know that the math games and the free games are and there are two shelves that they can use for games...
>
> ...it is in a church basement...there are two rooms, one room is the size of a regular classroom and then it has a small room that is about half the size separated by a wall...The large room is divided into two sections, one we call the activity room, (the other where) we can get together... All the furniture has been made by the teachers involved in the program. Now there are desks, but the desks are all covered and converted into tables by things that I have made, all the book cases, all the partitions, the drapes. We have individual tubes that each kid can put their things in, a sofa which is my sofa from home, the rug which is brought...

Schedules included choice times, reading times, informal discussion times, math times, writing times, journal times, and others.

At any point in time these diverse schedules and structures existed, but to complicate matters even more, these structures and schedules changed over time, generally becoming more complex during the year. An idea derived from the interviews was the <u>developmental classroom</u>. All the teachers described how they gradually developed more complex, individualized, personalized classrooms as the year progressed. There was an emphasis on gradual development coinciding with their diagnosis of, and insights into, the children in their classes. Thus, not only were classrooms complex at any given point of time during the year, but classroom complexity and classroom structure changed as the year progressed. It is therefore possible to make two kinds of analyses of

classroom life -- an analysis based on a "slice of classroom life" at any given point in time, and an analysis based on changing classroom structure and practice. In this section both analyses shall be developed.

In addition, classrooms were complex because of the diverse interactions occurring between teachers and students and among students. Again, this complexity of interactions changed as the year progressed, so that there were two kinds of analyses possible for classroom interactions -- the static slice of life interactions and the dynamic, developmental interactions as the class changed over the course of the year. These interactions related to complex decisions on the part of the teachers, spontaneous analyses, discipline, and many other types of interactions that we shall explore in this section.

Complex schedules and structures

Schedules and the organization of classrooms were complex and changing, but there were common patterns of classroom life developed by most of these teachers. Most began their day with an informal time, so that as children entered the room they were made to feel comfortable and found things to do on their own or with the help of the teacher. One teacher described it this way:

> They don't come in as a line. They can come in anytime after 8:30. They just come into the room, so they come in at different times, so you can get a few kids and show them a new game...

There is generally an informal quality to their initial morning experience in the classroom, and one gets the feeling that it is relaxed, but there are expectations that the children will be doing something. It is also a time to talk with the students and learn more about them:

> The kids come in, in threes and fours. Generally, they have something to tell us: how the kids have something to tell us every day is kind of amazing, but they seem to have something to tell us, which says something about their relationship. The kids will usually come in and talk, did you watch Fonzie last night, or I don't understand this math, could you help me with it, or I did extra credit for homework, or something like that. Generally, the other teacher and I kind of sit around, I usually have coffee and sit down and just talk to the kids. I try to move around. Some kids will take all your time every day so that it is necessary sometimes to move around. There are also things for the kids to do in the room, there is always some kind of new magazine that just came out or a couple of new books...There is always something that comes into the room. About 9:00 I turn off the lights...

Generally, this time period lasts about a half an hour. Then the first formal part of the day is often some kind of meeting. The class meets together and shares, discusses events, plans for the day, and so on. In one case the children get a book and sit quietly, reading it, before they have a meeting about the day.

Once the meeting is over, many of the teachers have a choice time, during which the children get to choose from among a number of pre-selected activities. In one case, the students were divided into three groups, two working with each of two teachers who teamed together and one working in a choice-centered activity corner.

It was during this time that most of the teachers allowed students the development of their free expression in many different modes. Two of the teachers working with children in the upper grades stressed a more diverse set of learning center activities in different subject areas,

such as science and social studies, but included other activities such as games, self-exploration questions, inquiry activities and so on. Examples of the types of activities described by the teachers that occurred during their choice time included the following:

- block building
- animal observation and care
- working with wax
- papier mache
- games
- children's literature and reference books
- clay
- sand
- paint
- weaving
- making their own books
- paper folding
- dramatic play
- science experiments
- social studies - self-awareness activities
- creative writing
- sewing
- puzzles
- writing plays
- building rocket ships
- making puppets
- creating math games
- building with cardboard boxes
- art activities
- music
- cooking
- water play
- wood working

Such self-expression activities included many modes:

> I see that this age group primarily needs to do a lot of socializing and a lot of the time they will pick drawing or games or blocks and it is really a way for them to talk to each other. That is what they need to do. And I think that the talking is an added form of expression that has its own form of validity that doesn't need to be around a particular thing, that a kid can be a talker and needs to have conversations with other kids and share things and that is how that person expresses himself best. He may not be a painter, he may not work in crafts, but he may be a good talker and tell great stories and that kind of thing has to be valued...

Thus the expressive modes also allow the children the opportunity to socialize and share and learn from one another, another important emphasis in this approach. And another teacher emphasizes the creative aspects of activity, or choice time:

> During the activity program, the kids do everything from write plays, build puppets, put together rocket ships, create math games -- it is the most open part of our program. The concern is that the kids have some fun and exhibit some of their creativity in less demanding ways, an example being there is rarely any marks given for activity. There isn't even a good or poor or anything. The only thing is any activity when completed is expected to be shown to the group. There is one check on quality, you have to show it... We found that to be about all we need in order to determine -- also, once someone does a good piece of work everyone realizes right away how much better their activity is and therefore what they should shoot for.

In addition to choice time, each of the teachers developed a variety of activities for teaching reading-language arts and math. Basically, what all these teachers had in common for reading and language arts was a varied, eclectic approach with formal and informal components. There was an emphasis both on skill development and on a great deal of actual reading, as well as on writing. All of these teachers had specific times set aside for reading instruction and language arts. Many of the teachers had small groups of children working on basal reading texts or other materials. In addition, many teachers indicated that reading skills was a highly individualized affair with constant diagnosis of student progress. One teacher put it this way:

> I begin to see who can recognize a whole word, who confuses letters and gets letter reversals...Reading a chart, I can see some children trying to memorize and that is a real hard thing to do in the beginning because I do a lot of repetition with the chart so I can tell that some kids are just saying it out of their head because I will be at one word and they will be twenty sentences ahead of me. I have to explain

> to them that they have to look at the word and say the word, that is reading, not memorizing it, that is not reading... That's with a lot of children; they know the alphabet from A to Z, but if you show them a B they don't know what it is, so I have to see what kind of activities will help them so that they will be able to recognize letters and words and certain children have a lot of sight words. If you show them the word once, they will know it. Certain children will not and the way to get around that is to let them choose certain words they want to learn which is what I'm going to be starting soon. And then hope that if the word has meaning for them, they will remember the word better.

Thus this teacher diagnoses and evaluates each child on the basis of complex performance criteria. This same first grade teacher often reads stories to the children,has them practice their handwriting, gives them other individualized work, and in general uses a variety of activities, some highly individualized, to foster reading and language arts skills.

One sixth grade teacher includes a variety of reading activities in her centers. During reading time, the students work in heterogeneous groups reading from a series of books, selecting the ones they want to read and getting help from other members of the group when they need it. Book reports, with simple factual questions and some value questions (e.g. who would you change places with in the story?) are also developed by the students who select their own books.

Another teacher has a variety of activities and develops contracts with individual children, including a variety of types of activities -- individualized reading with SRA kits, phonics work, storywriting, grammar, basal readers, and so on. Other activities, such as those during choice time, often complement this work because they emphasize reading and

writing skills. This teacher also will try to get students to read more difficult books by helping them to read a chapter at a time. There is a reading center where the students can choose their own books. For this teacher, using this more informal approach to reading and language arts was an important step in her own development:

> For the first six months (in an informal setting) I don't think I taught them reading, and what was remarkable about it was the fact that the kids were doing projects, they were still reading, and it took me a little while to realize in my mind that I didn't have to teach reading, and that they were learning how to read, and not only were they learning how to read, but they were learning better than when I was teaching reading...

One teacher, when asked what to her were the characteristics of a good reading program, summed up what seemed to be the feelings of most, if not all, of the teachers interviewed:

> In terms of the material end of it, to me it means having lots of books in the room, lots of different kinds of books -- story books, fact books on lots of different levels -- clearly visible and in some sort of organized form around the room and the kids are free to go to at any time... I would hope that I would always be able to use a wide variety of reading programs, which I have always been, fortunately, able to do, tied into one that the whole school uses, and to be able to find an approach that seems suitable to the kid, and if I don't think that the kid needs a program, I don't want to feel pressured to put him in one. I would hope that it means not feeling constrained to teach every kid in first grade to read by the end of first grade and having the patience and the confidence and the freedom from pressure to wait, because I don't think that it is so horrible -- having the kids want to read and love books, feel positive about reading and not look at it as some isolated skill broken down into arbitrary minute pieces that really don't mean anything...I don't feel that

> reading is a series of sequential skills, but I do think that there are some skills that are important to some kids. I think that once a kid is a reader, he no longer needs intensive work with phonics, because if you can drive down a busy street with traffic you can drive -- you don't need to break it down into parts. And that is the same way I feel about kids that can read. But I do teach skill, punctuation skills, the basic mechanics of reading and writing that I feel are important, and the phonics and the spelling, but certainly not exclusively and not in the way prescribed by the Board of Education and the Criterion Reference Tests and all that junk.

The latter part of this statement sums up a dilemma that many teachers seem to face with a large bureaucratic school system -- how to teach what one believes in the face of pressures and constraints that hinder (as they see it) their ability to be good teachers. More will be said about this later.

Other, more informal types of reading and language arts activities were also utilized in many classrooms. Teachers read to children on a regular basis, particularly using "chapter books" -- books with many chapters. A teacher would read one chapter a day to the students. Other teachers had special writing times, sometimes for writing down reactions to the day through journals and diaries, sometimes for more formal writing, such as poetry and stories. Another teacher indicated that after a formal reading time, she used a technique called sustained silent reading[4], when all the children would select a book of their choice and everyone in the room (including the teacher) would find a comfortable place in the room and read silently.

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4. For a description of this technique, see R. A. and M. J. McCracken, Reading Is Only The Tiger's Tail. San Rafael, CA.: Leswing Press, 1972, pp. 151-154.

Mathematics, as these teachers described it, is generally taught in a more formal way, with large group sessions and small group or individualized work geared to the appropriate level and interest of the child. In one case, standardized test scores for math rose significantly as compared with other classes, and it is interesting to describe the math approach used by this teacher that he believes affected the outcome. This teacher uses a group learning experience in some unique ways. He takes them step by step through a sequence of math activities. A child is tested at the end of each week to see if he knows a piece of work. As this teacher says, "I never take it for granted that the kids do know certain things. If a child indicates that he knows some work, he is still required to complete the group work, but after that, may do some other work." This teacher also does everything he can to find alternative means to learn the same ideas, so that if a child does not learn something the first time, other ways are found to help him. Also, if a child finishes his work, he is asked to help someone else learn it. There is a strong emphasis on group responsibility for learning certain ideas. The class does not go on to other ideas until everyone understands what they are doing. The work is designed to create maximum success among the students.

Thus this teacher developed a very structured approach to math setting standards with high expectations and group responsibility and figuring out appropriate ways to help individual students meet those standards. Students are evaluated on their performance based on those expectations. Since he works with about one-third of the children at a time during the day (the others are doing choices and reading-language arts) he is able to give them some individual attention, to check their

work, and to make sure they are succeeding. He also spends a great deal of time deciding on many methods to help students learn the same ideas. This has led to significant improvement in their mathematical achievement as measured by standardized tests.

In addition to informal morning time meetings, choice time, reading-language arts activities and math, there are other planned and spontaneous activities that take place in these classrooms. An activity found in many of these classrooms were projects. Often these grew out of some classroom activity that interested the children.

> It seems to me the nicest things that happen...are the things that happen spontaneously. When we read Stuart Little (a children's literature book), we had no idea that the kids would like to make Stuart Little houses. We had shoe boxes downstairs and one kid started it and the kids loved it. My husband got me boxes from this shoe guy. They made little houses for Stuart Little -- they made mice out of some fur that we had and then that day I read about chairman of the world, we had a substitute teacher. And then I asked my kids for their writing to write and draw a picture about if Stuart Little was a substitute teacher at our school. Then I made little mice books that they have enjoyed writing in themselves...

Other teachers described similar projects that grew out of something the children became interested in or something the teacher developed:

> Last year we put on a play...During choice time most of the activities were geared to the production of this play; they were making things for the play. We didn't have choice time then...We were doing a lot of literature with the librarian and I worked very closely with the librarian. Each week we had taken a different topic. We had done poetry. We had done fairy tales and fables and folk tales and we decided to put on a program for the parents to show them what kinds of work that we had done in the library, what kinds of literature we had

> been studying and so, we chose two plays to put on and we worked at the library on it...They were a very dramatic-oriented class...
>
> ...We have a library project now, where every kid is reading a book about animals that live in the sea and during that reading time...they do their reading in the library. They take notes from what they read and I will hopefully have them write up some things...
>
> This year we started out with Charlotte's Web and did a lot of insect work with that, collecting the bugs, preserving and writing about it...Last year's class really loved the Little House on the Prairie series and I read every single one...it took me all year and from that we did a lot of pioneer stuff, baking and candle making, old fashioned Christmas toys and then we talked about them, about how it would be if you got a candy cane or a piece of rag for Christmas and a lot of cooking came out of that, lots of talking about what life was about when there was none of the stuff we are used to, which was really neat...

These, then, were some of the complex ways these teachers used to organize their time in classrooms: informal times, meeting times, choice times, reading-language arts activities, both formal and informal, including multi-varied activities such as chapter reading, sustained silent reading, writing, etc., a math time that was more structured but also individualized, and spontaneous and planned projects. Generally the choice times or math times or reading-language arts times involve a variety of skill and independent activities that students do alone, in pairs, or in small groups. They may be working in workbooks, doing writing, reading and answering questions, working at centers and so on. In some classrooms groups rotated through such activities as reading and language arts, math and choice times. Each teacher developed, within their general structure, unique patterns and experiences for the children.

Developing the complex classroom

As pointed out earlier, complex classrooms and structures not only existed at any given point in time but changed over the course of time. All of the teachers explained how they gradually developed a more individualized and personalized classroom during their year (or years) with their students. There was an emphasis on helping students adjust to the complexity and the required independence and responsibility-taking that went hand in hand with individualization. The style of the development seemed to relate to the children in each class and the age of the children, as well as the style of the teacher. Some teachers, for example, began with almost the exact schedule that they followed during the year, except that there were fewer and simpler choices offered during choice time and reading-language arts and math were used primarily for diagnostic purposes. Some teachers who had the same students as the previous year were able to allow them greater independence and used them to help the new children adjust to the routines. It seemed that the teachers of younger children were more likely to begin with the basic schedule followed throughout the year, whereas the older children spent more time exploring the classroom and working as a large group:

> The first two weeks are the most highly structured of all the time we would spend... Everyone comes in the first day and what they see is a room full of bare walls, no activity center set up, the aquarium is not set up, there are no animals in the room -- it is pretty much a blank slate... we set up groups of desks and the first few days of assignments are mostly write this, copy these problems, do this -- we are highly structured. We try not to yell a lot. We are not trying to scare anyone, but when children come into a situation that is so totally different as going to

> school in a church basement, we have found it necessary to establish a sense of order because many of the kids that are sent to us because they were discipline problems or some kind of problem in the main building and they feel in some ways they have been sent to a non-school...We found that since the kids have been in summer vacation many of them almost enjoy getting into a routine. After...a week and a half we begin to open up, open up very gradually. I might bring in a few books and say, okay, when anyone is done their math book, they can look at these books. By the end of two weeks or even two and a half weeks, they are given fifteen minutes out of their math period to look at books even if they aren't finished. Eventually the books are there for them any time they want...Generally the activity centers in the beginning are ditto sheets which I don't really consider activity centers. In the activity room, there would be a center. The first two weeks there is nothing except maybe a table. After two weeks, there will be some activity sheets on there that could be something like take your age and multiply it by five divided by this and your answer would be seven, a little math game or something... They would do those during activity time... I also start the second day to read to the kids, because I find that a quiet activity also dissipates some of the tension over "is this what the school is going to be like". I try to pick a sure winner kind of book to start off with....The open time in the morning starts the second day. It is just...how long it goes on...the first few days it might only be five minutes...

Gradually, more activities are added to activity time, and more open time is allowed, based on the teacher's analysis of the children's abilities to work on their own and their need for structured activities.

Another teacher described the beginning of her year this way:

> During the first few weeks are really the most important few weeks because...I really concentrate at least five weeks on having the kids know the routines, making sure that each area is cleaned up, that each thing is put away where it belongs, that snack is cleaned up at the tables and whatever rules that we have set down are followed. We follow the kids to make sure those things are done and that the kids know here to put papers when they are finished working on them. We don't even start with the sand or the woodworking or messy art projects or big art projects or anything really at all, but just getting the kids into the routine...

The children in this class begin the year with a choice time, but with simple choices that can be monitored easily. There is a lot of discussion about the rules and routines. Gradually more choices are added and the children work more independently.

Another teacher began the year with the following structured approach:

> I spend a lot of the first two weeks having the children learn each other's names and we do a lot of games to learn each other's names. We formulate our rules for the classroom. We do that together. I try not to put too much input into that unless I see something left out that I think is crucial, then I raise my hand, too. I say that I have a rule that I would like to put in...So it is the rules, the names and I give them a little taste of all the things that they are going to be doing, a little taste of reading, a little taste of math and science -- for example we do experience stories to start out about the room. We draw a self-portrait and we talk about our families, something that they are familiar with and they contribute the words so that they can usually read one or two of the words. With math we do a lot of work with the cuisinnaire rods, preparing them.

This first grade teacher also introduces a few games at a time during a choice time until the children feel comfortable with them. As the children come in in the morning they are introduced to the games, or after they finish some work they can explore a game.

Thus in all three cases (and with the other teachers as well) there is an attempt to ease students into a more complex classroom situation by simplifying the classroom structure and helping children understand the rules, routines and tasks they will be doing during the year. The progression occurred with simple changes -- making gradually more complex choices discussing rules and procedures and monitoring them, giving students more time for independent activities. There was an obvious, careful, and deliberate attempt on the part of these teachers to progress in this fashion throughout the year, moving to more complex, individualized classroom activities. One teacher summarized it this way:

> You kind of break them in gently. You are giving them the freedom but you are monitoring them so much that they don't realize how much you have monitored them to get them to where you want them very easily, step by step, to let go of the reins so that, by the end, they are in better shape than if you had just let them go off and running...

Complex Interaction Patterns

Another feature of these teachers and their classrooms were the complex interaction patterns. In the analysis of the interviews it became clear that the way these teachers interacted with children could not be treated as an isolated phenomenon. Rather, interactions were intimately linked with many other patterns of teaching. For example, these teachers indicated that they engaged in a never-ending struggle to understand the children in their class, to motivate them, to help them learn how to express themselves, and so on. The interviews were replete with comments about this struggle. One teacher, when discussing a child who was having trouble learning to read, said the following:

> I think he's so nervous that he can't let anyone get really close to him -- he's got such tremendous fears. I've never really hollered at him or done anything to him that should make him fearful of me, but I think he's fearful of the whole situation... but with another kid, who's got some skills, he isn't really afraid...

For this teacher it was important for "just one teacher sitting down, reading with, listening to, talking to the kid, figuring out what's wrong, just by being with him..." Another teacher, when asked what advice she would give to a new teacher responded with:

> ...to really listen to kids, to find out how they think, what they are feeling...

The thread of this attitude runs through all the interviews, and these teachers seemed to spend much time trying to figure their kids out, to listen to them, to learn about them. There was continual observation and analysis of the childre that influenced these teacher's decisions and actions in the classroom.

The observations and analyses of children seemed to be of two kinds. One included an analysis of cognitive abilities, interests, and the like. One teacher, as he focussed on how he figures out what children should be learning, put it this way:

> ...Usually, I have a few questions that I ask the child and the way that he answers them tends to help me. It is really a feeling, well, he doesn't understand how multiplication works, so maybe he needs cuisennaire rods...It takes me about a week to pick up on the kind of learning style that a child who is having difficulty has...
>
> (When I sit down with them, I might ask them) ...I am going to give you a pattern. Fill in the missing: four, eight, twelve, and if the kid seems to have no idea of what is going on, obviously he doesn't see the kind of sequence that occurs here. Another way, we are setting up tables in the room and there are going to be four chairs at each table, we have six tables, how many chairs do you think we have, and if the kid says 150, now if he can't give me the right answer to that then I think maybe he just needs to drill, he has just plain forgotten it, but if he can tell me, well, six tables and four chairs, that will be twenty four, if he can do that then he can do it...

This type of intricate analysis was described in detail by only a few of the teachers interviewed, but one gets the feeling from the interviews that all of the teachers systematically diagnose and analyze their children's learning in order to provide individualized instruction.

Teachers mentioned a variety of formal and informal methods used for this cognitive analysis. Many of them described formal diagnostic procedures used at the beginning of the semester to determine a child's ability levels:

> The math they get is the math they know how to do and when they get to the point that they don't know how to do it then we pull back...

The methods include individual interviews and discussions, listening to children read, special math tests developed by the school district to determine math abilities, analyzing writing, and so on. Varied types of performance was the most important basis for analysis and diagnosis.

In addition to the formal and informal procedures one teacher, for example, had long discussions with the previous teachers of these children to find out about them and their work. She also discussed some more general techniques that she used:

> In the beginning(of the year) I spend a lot of time watching and making notes at night and listening to them...I have them do writing right away and make it very clear that I have to see it...I watch them and think about...what they might be thinking about...

Thus through formal testing procedures, informal interviews, carefully watching and observing children, these teachers seem to be able to grasp the cognitive levels and abilities of their students, their interests, and the like. This analysis has a strong bearing on their classroom interactions and their approaches to individualized and personalized learning.

A second kind of analysis includes both general and specific psychological insights about individuals and groups of children accumulated through their past and present experiences. These insights dealt with children's individual problems and often with their sense of failure: the previously cited example of the nervous and fearful student is one example. Teachers spoke about insights into whether children are lazy or bored, whether they are feeling pressured, whether they have adequate feelings of self-esteem or feelings of failure, whether their ego needs to be built up, how they will feel if certain incidents occur in the

class, such as giving homework (or not giving homework) or pressuring a student, etc. Interestingly, there seems to be little discussion of student's home life and background as important considerations. It seems that their psychological analysis is of the children and their desire is to include this analysis in decisions they make about how to best motivate children to learn.

Most of the teachers used some form of record-keeping, usually daily or weekly notes, that they kept on their observations and analyses. One teacher indicated that she wished that she was able to do this more carefully:

> We have a way of keeping records, it is not systematic because we don't do it as often as we say we are going to do it. We have a page for each kid and we write in the things that we think are important. What we are supposed to do and have agreed to do is write in every week. That, I must say, I have never been able to do that for a year. . .

She also indicated, as did other teachers, that she kept all of the children's work at the beginning and a representative sample of all the children's work during the remainder of the year. She uses this work to "...jot on the paper if it is too hard or he didn't get it..." Record keeping seems to be an important part of their continual cognitive and psychological analysis.

In all of this, there is a clinical quality to their observations and their analysis. They are clearly trying to describe what they see from their observations of the children. They do not use these observations to excuse themselves or blame the child or the home for what happens in the classroom. There also were multiple techniques used

over time to assess and reassess their analyses of the children's success in their classrooms based on the performance of students. There was a clearly dynamic, developmental process for learning about their children and using their observations with children as represented by the following statement:

> ...there were a lot of directed lessons during the day so the following day I would pass out the sheets and see what they learned from it and what other kind of work they would need...when the breakfast program came in they would...do a math paper so that I could see what they did and what they learned or what they could recall from the lesson from the day before...

This continual process of diagnosis and analysis leading to planned and spontaneous classroom interactions made it very difficult to separate cognitive and psychological analysis from the classroom actions. The interviews often contained discussions of diagnosis and analysis of children followed immediately by decisions and planned actions. The two were intimately intertwined. As one teacher put it:

> ...I guess with some kids you learn you can't be harsh with them because they will cry; with some you learn that they need a good kick in the pants to get moving. You learn the kind of things they might like to read about and try to have a lot of those kind of books in the room. I learned how to approach each kid in terms of what is the best way...

The psychological and cognitive information is continually fed into action and planning and decisions about classroom routines and schedules, planned activities, and individual treatment of children. One teacher, for example, felt that her children needed routines and stability in order to make her children feel comfortable, and important factor in the motivation and involvement of her children in learning:

> ...I have a schedule each day of the week and that schedule would continue the following week. I mean the content of the reading, the content of the math would change, but the time would remain the same. The kids don't have a whole lot of stability and they are looking for some stability, so if I have some expectations for them, they feel a lot better if they know that in a certain time they will eat and in a certain time they will do this and that.

Another teacher described how a decision was made about giving homework to the children, and why the homework was checked.

> I used to be unsure about homework, but now I am pretty sure about it in that it seems necessary because the kids feel a loss if it is not there. They feel they are being cheated in some way. No homework assignment is ever so hard that it would really deprive a child of your precious time. It is mostly fifteen minutes to a half hour at the most. I check the homework not because I need to, but since the kids did it, I feel that they deserve to have it checked. When people do work, someone should take notice of it... (author's emphasis)

In all of these analyses, decisions, and actions, there is a strong emphasis on helping the child learn, but in doing so in a humane way. The teachers interviewed, however, do not feel as if they should abdicate their roles as teacher and agree that if a child needs to be pressured, he or she ought to be. They continually take into account their perceptions of the motivations of their students, based on their continual analyses:

> In other words, if I know a kid can do division and yet we are doing work and he has only done two or three columns of work and everyone has done six or seven, either he is bored with it and I should be doing something else with him or he is just lazy and I feel an obligation to make him use his time better. If it is a kid who just doesn't seem to want to do the work, I'll find out

> what is going on. If he doesn't have a good excuse, then I'll say that I want you to do it... (author's emphasis)
>
> Why is he so angry, maybe I should just take him modeling, maybe I can talk to him while he is doing the models since he won't talk to me face to face. Maybe if he is doing something else, he will talk to me indirectly...(author's emphasis)
>
> I have had kids like this before or I know this boy and I know this kid and if you don't tell him, he is just never going to do anything...

Classroom decisions are often made spontaneously with great flexibility, based on the accumulated data from each child as well as a sense of the situation to be dealt with:

> The decisions are often, who gets time even though I set that up ahead of time. I often have to change on the spot, who needs time right now, how much instruction to give, how much to respect independence, how much to intervene and how much to let it happen and that kind of thing. Those decisions might be when to intervene when the kids are having a discussion among themselves if it looks like it is on the verge of hurting someone's feelings or turning into a fight or when to come in and say 'what is going on'. The decision may be who needs special attention for the group, which story am I going to read that the kid wrote himself. In other words, even if so and so had the story read yesterday, it may look as if he is having a tough day and he looks like he needs that little boost and I am going to read his story again even though somebody else didn't have a story read for two days or he is okay and he can handle it. That is very on the spot, very intuitive, not even highly conscious... I know that sometimes I am not sure that I made the right decisions...

I am always reevaluating what I have planned and trying to see if it is going across, if it is over their heads, if it is too slow and so I have to make changes there...If I see a need arising for a certain type of lesson, then I will put that in the next day's plan...I may have to change the pace if they are getting bored and restless. Then we do some movement activities to get them to feel a little more relaxed...I might overestimate certain children or underestimate certain children so I have to reevaluate them in my mind. Children that I think are not capable really show me up and some kids reach a frustration point because I put something upon them that was too difficult...

In math I basically stick to a plan. I pretty much know where I want to go. In science, the lessons haven't ended up where I wanted them to, but have ended up better, more interesting. Both poetry and science I have been more willing to say wait a minute, what do you mean by_____ and we'll stop a lesson and we'll talk about why things happen, and the benefits are usually worth it...If a kid isn't interested I usually will stop and probably play a little game or something...if it is near the end of the lesson, they will just stick it through. If it is in the middle of the lesson or the beginning of the lesson, then I will try to approach it in a new way, something like adding a variable of speed -- 'say, listen, instead of doing those five problems on the board, we are going to time you for one minute' and that is just an attempt to kind of jazz things up. Then what I'll try to do is to think of how, when I have the next group, how I could change it around. Fortunately if you have been teaching long enough you know enough of those tricks to whip something up. Multiplication drill can drive you crazy, yet there are a hundred games that you can pull out of the hat, doing them backwards, doing it from the inside out...

These decisions are based on an assessment of the interest of the students as well as their needs, and are designed to create a stimulating teaching situation to excite children about learning. "I think it is important for teachers to be stimulating...(for students) to have something new": that is the motto of most of these teachers.

The same kinds of diagnoses and analyses come together for these teachers in their discussions of individual children. These teachers seem to have the ability to focus on one or more children and analyze them from many different points of view. In effect, one gets the feeling of a "whole person" analysis, based on a focus on skills and psychological development:

> Jose was trying to get into our program for two years and we didn't even know it. He went to school and he had been in school and was just raising hell and had gotten all E's and was getting suspended constantly, a lot of trouble. He came to us with a kind of being excited about being in the room, he didn't quite know how to handle himself and what I had to do was in the same way keep his enthusiasm alive yet bring him down to reality. In other words, he was just interrupting when we would have a morning time. He was bringing toys in to show. I want to do a play. I want to make a rocket ship...He just didn't know how to handle all opportunities that he had. For years he wanted to do all these things. It was like a child--if you took him to Kiddie City and said you could have anything that you wanted, the kid would go crazy. What I did was, we sat down and we talked, I told him how glad I was to have him in the room, that he has a lot to give in the room, we are really happy to have him. I wanted him to understand that we were happy to have him. I wanted him to know that we aren't going to hold anything that happened before against him. The games of him getting into trouble are over. There was no need to play them here. There is plenty to do that you wanted to do, so you don't need those games. I asked him what he was really interested in. He had about nine or ten

different interests and he had one interest in particular. I had brought in a marionette. He desperately wanted to make a marionette...I am going to let you make one but you must finish it. I did hook him up with a girl who is very good and very organized to help him do it. Two days later, I saw him during activity time which is when he was supposed to be working on the marionette and he wasn't doing it and he said I don't want to do it anymore and I said you agreed to do it and you have to do it. If you don't do that, then you won't have any activity time, you will have to go over and sit there, on that chair, by yourself, not doing a thing. And he looked at me and I had a feeling that he was thinking that this was just like the other school. I said, "Jose, I admire your intelligence too much to allow you to play dumb and to play lazy. I think that you can build that marionette. I am willing to give you a chance. I will not let you be less than you can be. I kind of forced him to finish that marionette. It took him a week. He was very proud of it. It was a beautiful thing. I had him show this and I talked to him about it. He said he was glad that I made him finish it. I said now that is the way that we work it...

There is one kid that interests me very much, a little boy who came at the beginning of last year. I had been lucky enough to have him for two years. At the beginning of last year, he was just a beginning reader, but he showed enormous interest in the insects that I had at the beginning of last year. He struggled over books, information books, books about spiders, and I realized that the kind of intensity that he showed to all the science activities, all the animals, was not the same spunk, it wasn't the same energy and this was the wrong method for this child. I took him out of the basal book and put him into a series of library books. I worked out with the librarian a special plan. There were seven kids that were very beginning readers, and because of watching this one child I decided to do the same with all seven kids. Each of them got a library book that was just a fun book each week and that was

their reading book. They took that home every night and they read it and they brought it back the next day and they got a new book and we had it set up like that... I have watched him and he is always fair, I can see him becoming more a leader in the class...I watched him very closely. I know a lot about him, I know he has lots of problems using standardized materials. He doesn't have those same problems in reading books about science or football. He has problems with comprehension; he can't follow directions in a workbook and it is not to say that workbooks are bad, because not all are...I have to make sure that he always has books that are interesting to him and make sure that I share their stories a lot and make sure that when he does the workbook, I have to go over the whole thing because he has misread a lot of it.

I get to read with Herbert twice a week one to one and help him with his reading vocabulaty and his problems. He has a motor coordination problem, so I give him extra work in handwriting and we check his improvement in his folder. Now this is the second year that I have had Herbert so I can see a lot of progress and he seems to be a lot happier, too. In the beginning he was really worried and hung up and would cry because he thought I would look at him crosswise...I think that he used to get pressured before. I am not sure what kind of pressure, but he would come into the classroom afraid and crying. So, I think what was happening was that he was told to write or to decide what hand to write with, so he was writing with both and his handwriting was bad with both hands, so each time that he would write I would notice that he was writing with the other hand, but I didn't bother him about it. It seemed that if he was happy with writing with that hand that day it was okay.

> Then we would talk about the work that he did and I really wouldn't get hung up about the homework, not the homework or the handwriting, we would just talk about his progress in his math and his handwriting and anything else that he did. It seems that as time went on, he wasn't pressured and he wasn't questioned, he just kind of decided on which hand he wanted to write with and he knew that that wasn't the most important thing like the writing, it was what he was accomplishing in math, if he was reading, if he was trying to do his independent work...I follow up on him in the center. If I see him working there, then I will talk to him about what he is doing...

Thus the continual accumulation of data based on cognitive and psychological observations is used to assess how to handle individual children, to make spontaneous classroom decisions, to develop classroom routines and the like, for stimulating, involving and motivating children and for reaching classroom goals.

Obviously, with over thirty students in each class, continual psychological analyses and cognitive diagnosis requires teachers to constantly think about their children and their teaching. What I think helps them is the individualized process that they develop, with the initial weeks spent in very structured activities preparing the children to work on their own and learning about and carefully observing the children. When the class becomes more individualized, these teachers continue to watch and listen, to use informal and formal means at their disposal, to check impressions against children's work, to use their experiences to decide on how to handle each child, and to thus personalize learning by attempting to tailor an individual's learning experiences to his or her needs. Their classroom roles are exacting, requiring a

special kind of person who is able to set flexible standards depending on each child's circumstances, watch for individual problems, build egos, motivate with interesting classroom ideas, etc. The teacher is in constant motion, constant involvement:

> I am very busy. I am moving around. There are several kids that I have to hear every day, that I have to make some contact with every day and there are more than several, there may be twelve or thirteen that I have to get to every day. Even if it is for a small thing like you go on to do this page in your workbook and this is how you do it, because they are not too independent yet. Then I hear other kids read or I provide words or read what they have written or I check workbooks. So, I am moving around the whole time.

One does not get the picture of the teacher sitting behind the desk while the children are busy working, but rather of a teacher who has "waded in" with the children, is right there in the thick of things, learning, growing and changing.

Planning

Teachers indicated that they spent a great deal of time planning for their teaching, modifying their plans according to their accumulation of data and insights based on previous and current experiences. Most of the teachers distinguished between short range and long range planning. Short range planning consisted of thinking about the kids and planning to meet their individual needs. For example, one teacher explicitely elaborated on the way she made plans for individualizing learning:

> (During the day) I write down what choice a kid has made. I may write down while I am hearing somebody else read, I am making notes on a problem that a kid may have. I may check off if he is going to the library or not going to the library or if he has

> done his workbook or not done his workbook... I have a list of all the kids and what reading activities they had to do...I often take notes at night...I tried at the beginning of the year to make short notes on every child from the list of what their choice was and I found that to be very tedious. I do it less often, maybe every week I do a summary of what the kid has done for the week, but I may have seen six kids reading and (at night) I need to write down right away what they came up with because I had notes in a little book that I carry around the room all day and I will transfer those notes on his records so that I won't forget them.
>
> Then I will have some plans and mental plans for the next day. I may make up some special math dittos if I am really noticing that somebody has trouble with a particular math operation. I may take workbooks home and check them...I do plans daily. I think over what the flow might be, maybe putting something new in the morning. I may think over what kind of choice time, it looked as if we need a new activity or if there was too much, if the kids were at loose ends and there needed to be some special guidance in that either creating something new or suggesting that somebody work with somebody else.

Most of the teachers indicated that their plans were developed informally, out of their analysis of children's needs. Some teachers spoke about their informal planning of new activities within choice times for social studies or science. There was a feeling of constant ebbing and flowing of plans and events, depending in large measure on their analysis of children's cognitive abilities at any given time and their moods, daily needs, and so on.

Long range planning consisted mostly of planning out the daily schedule and flow of events. This was either done as a long range yearly plan before the start of school or as a monthly or weekly plan.

Then more short range planning consisted of filling in the activities and events for such things as choice time, reading-language arts, and math. These plans included deciding on when to put out a new activity in choice time, what activities to give specific children in reading and math, and so on. Some of these types of decisions and plans are made the night before; others are made spontaneously, as new evidence and new data become apparent during the course of the day.

Long range planning includes the planning of special long term projects, generally three to four week projects or longer. Here for example, is one long term planning example:

> We are going to the zoo on Friday. We want to fit into the zoo besides the animals and all the kinds of things that you would normally do when you go to the zoo, we would like to do the same thing at the zoo that we did when we went to the farm, because it worked out very nicely. We will probably break up into about three or four groups and trace on the map with different color tape or something the different paths that everybody went to first. Then the kids drew animals and we pasted up the animals. That is part of our social studies thing, mapping. We hope in the nice weather to go to our neighborhoods and do it. So, we plan what we would do. Last week we planned -- we have three groups for mapping, one group started with blocks making a map of the room with the real block shape like the tables and things. I took another group and we drew a map of the back room and then I hid things and I point to it on the map and they had to find it...

Projects included library projects and science or social studies projects developed for use in activity centers or as ongoing classroom activities.

Classroom Complexity and Motivating Children

These teachers indicated, directly and indirectly, a variety of ideas about ways to motivate children. Clearly most of the teachers believed that such things as choice, self-expression activities, building on children's interests were important for motivating children, stimulating curiosity, and the like. Reversing feelings of failure and developing self-esteem and success were also important. One teacher, however, had an interesting perspective on questions of motivation, and since this teacher's students scored significantly higher in achievement testing in math, it is worth considering his viewpoint. He focussed very heavily on "success" and the psychological preparation of children in order to develop their perceptions of success. In addition to his very careful diagnosis of the problems of these students, his approach was to prepare the students by making them believe that their work would be very difficult so that success would be assured:

> Then I usually say something like 'this stuff is really hard, so get ready for some hard work', and then I usually give them a real simple example and the kids will say that's not so hard and then we begin to do whatever it is that we are doing...(The kids) are expected to help anyone at their table who is having trouble.
>
> An example is that you have to find something that the kids can definitely succeed in and you have to make a point that this is harder than it really is. There are few kids that can't do the one table and the ten times table, I want everybody in this room to better know this by the end of the week...well, everybody passes (the test) and moves to the eleven times table.

His job, he felt, was to convince the students that they were successfully accomplishing difficult work and thus to feel successful. It was the

student's perception of success that was important. He called this a "con job":

> It's a con job. I'll tell you where I got this idea from. It was a coach...he was a track coach. What he used to do with his team was their first time out he would have new runners, he would come and say 'do you know you are great and almost record time, I don't believe you can do that! And... every year he turned out good runners. Part of it is a con job and part of it is giving kids things they can do.

His complex classroom included three groups, some working in language arts and reading tasks, some in math, and some on independent activities. The motivational focus was on informality, independence and choice, but also on creating a feeling of success through his group activities. The probability of successful experiences was increased by this teacher's reliance on the use of a variety of methods for achieving the same ends and on making the group responsible for each other's learning. Evidently the psychological preparation, variety of methods and group responsibility had a powerful influence, along with the classroom environment, on the achievement of students.

Discipline

Most of these teachers indicated that early in the year they established a set of rules and consequences designed to aid in the smooth running of the classroom and to minimize problems. Some teachers suggested that they used affective activities and problem solving approaches to build feelings of informality and trust, aiding the prevention of discipline problems. However, there were differences that

these teachers perceived in their children which led to the need for different types of discipline techniques. One teacher indicated that her class simply was not skilled in working together and that discipline was a serious problem. She spent a good part of her two years helping children to develop these skills. Other teachers indicated that they rarely had discipline problems with their students.

While there was a great deal of individualization and personalization of learning, there was little "permissiveness". All of the teachers described ways that they developed to create a fair system of classroom rules and justice and to take into account individual circumstances when applying the rules, but they were consistent in their approach to breaking the rules: One teacher also described a "logical consequences" approach to discipline:[5]

> I try to make the punishment fit the crime, that is, if they don't clean up after snack or they have eaten too much snack or they have thrown food around, then they can't have snack for the rest of the week. I think when I just began teaching I would have said 'oh, you can't do that' and said anything. I find it is better, and that is not an easy thing for me to do, that I have to be very firm about it. I send the children away from reading or math or choice time, they have to sit quietly if they can't participate in a satisfactory way and I don't care what it is. I don't make reading more important than choice. I try to make them miss the activity that they are misbehaving in. If they can't sit at meetings, they can sit out on the steps where they can see the room but are out of the room.

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5. See Rudolph Dreikurs, Psychology in the Classroom, Second Edition. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

One teacher, who spoke at great length about discipline, mentioned a number of items. The basic philosophy she enumerated was gaining the respect of the children:

> You have to earn their respect before you can do anything else. If you don't have their respect, then no matter what you try to do you are going to have mass chaos. A lot of things they are going to do for you if they feel that you are fair enough to give them something back in return...

Respect is gained in a number of ways. One is to try to solve disputes without resorting to fighting and to "keep your own cool". A consistent problem-solving approach was important. Mentioning punishments and following through on them was important. Being consistent about what is to be tolerated and not tolerated, yet taking into account differences in individual children and circumstances, is also important. This teacher distinguishes between the beginning of the year when it is important to be very consistent, and later on when the children believe it is fair to take into account individual circumstances.

> Maybe if this kid is always in trouble, but he is always improving-after the kids respect you enough, then it is time for him to know that you are going to be a little bit easier on him, because he is really trying. I don't think you can do it in the beginning, because then it is at that time they see a double standard. Once you have gotten to the point that they respect you enough, they don't see it; they understand that for him, he is being good. They have to grow too along with everybody else.

One also gets the sense, explicitely expressed by one teacher, that these teachers believe their individualized and personalized classrooms help to minimize and prevent discipline problems:

> I fortunately don't have many discipline problems. I guess I agree with the idea that you should stop the problem before it starts, because it is usually the result of some faulty thing, maybe as the lesson got too long they got bored and they were nudging each other and that developed into a fight, so if the lesson hadn't been so long the problem wouldn't have arisen...if they are clear on where they are going and what they are doing, then you don't have a lot of problems. If you find children who cause problems, they are usually the ones who aren't involved in anything and are bored so if you can get them and ask them what they would like to do, but if they can't think of anything, then try a few suggestions, usually you hit upon something that they want to do. They want to be doing something...

For this teacher, the multiple activities in a stimulating environment that allows for choice enables her to solve many so-called discipline problems easily.

Personal Development as a Teacher

One of the most fascinating parts of the interviews was the teacher's explorations of their personal development. All of them presently are very much involved in their teaching and in individualized and personalized learning, but it wasn't always so. Many of the teachers did tell of first years in teaching that were individualized, but many others described opposite approaches.

> I wasn't familiar with open education or anything and I really didn't know that there was an alternative so I just took it from there and the children there were reading on level or above level. I had a second grade classroom. Math was on level or above. If there were any kind of problems, there were one or two in the class and there were specialists who called the children out and helped them and the

> parents were very cooperative and there didn't seem to be any problems, so the way that it was running was really fine. They didn't need any extra motivation or turn on or materials or anything else. They weren't from a deprived area, so there really wasn't any problem in this suburban classroom...
>
> My first year of teaching was terrific. Seven years ago, basically white, basically lower middle class mothers would send cupcakes and cookies in, mothers would send flowers in the morning. The kids were the kind that for the first three days I would not hear a sound, nobody talking. I wrote lesson plans, I underlined them in red, I had my times and my schedules, and my page numbers. I was very well prepared. I had three reading groups and two math groups. I went on and did other things. I gave spelling tests and math tests and if you got an 80 you got an 80, and I recorded them into my little marking book, and I taught so fast the following week and it was a perfect year -- and I don't think anybody learned a blessed thing!!!

Another teacher described his first year of teaching this way:

> I...had a very hard time the first year. I was ready to quit. Kids were fighting in my room, yelling. I wasn't teaching. When I gave the kids work, it was mostly busy work just to be quiet.

Some of the teachers found themselves faced with impossible situations that required them to rethink their ways of teaching:

> Once I came to Philadelphia (for my second year of teaching) I taught the fourth grade here, it was really frustrating. The kids didn't want to be here. They hated school. I didn't want to be here either with their attitude that way. It was really hard to turn them on and you would bend over backwards. It was a traditional setting and they were all at different levels...Then I started seeking ways of interesting them and running a better classroom and having a better teaching situation...

Other teachers had previous training in undergraduate programs or with specific schools and specific kids that enabled them to more quickly develop an individualized program:

> I had at my college majored in nursery-kindergarten and had done all my student teaching in pre-school and kindergarten and had hoped to get a kindergarten or nursery school placement. So much of what I had seen was with the younger children and I just knew that this is what these kids needed. I mean, because they were the bottom group most of the kids here had never been to school, they were just right off the street first graders. It became more and more clear to me that they needed that kind of experience and they could obviously talk, but they didn't. I just knew that keeping them seated down listening to me all day, that they weren't going to learn to talk. The year went all right...

There were a number of influences on their teaching that aided them as they developed a more individualized and personalized program. Some had been trained as undergraduates in programs that stressed that kind of learning, and they believed in it strongly. Others were faced with impossible teaching situations, with kids who did not want to be in school, who had tremendous problems, who were at different levels of development. Many of them indicated that at critical points special people and special programs entered their own lives or the lives of their school:

> I met a lot of people, like in my third year Jack came and Tom was trying to impress upon me how important these things were and about open education which I thought Tom was absolutely out of his mind. He was calling teachers facilitators when I was in my second year, and I was so thrilled to be called a teacher I thought facilitator -- what kind of a fancy name was that...but I started to listen and learn from them...

Another teacher:

> In that year, also, follow-through also came into the system and the open classroom model came to my school and things really began -- that's kid of where I ended up fitting in, so it really worked out well...I also went to England... and visited some schools there.

Other people described similar occurrences with principals, friends, colleagues who acted as a support group, other programs that entered the school, undergraduate training programs, and so on. These experiences and people influences had a powerful effect on these teachers, and for some, thrust into different situations, led them to search for new approaches that would have more meaning for their children.

All of these experiences and problems led to many feelings and much personal growth on the part of these teachers. There was an effort at self-understanding and change:

> The second year was bad because I met a group of boys who backed up on me and who I made into a group -- I screamed throughout most of my second year. I hollered, screamed, ranted, raved, team taught with the guy next door for reading, and we spent more days punishing those kids for talking than for reading...our hearts were in the right place, but our methods were lousy... I didn't realize what I was doing until a guy across the hall came over and he said to me: 'why are you screaming? You've been screaming for three weeks!', and that was the first time I was conscious I was doing something wrong. Because the girl next door to me also hollered a lot and she was helping me to teach, and was very supportive and good to me, and I didn't think I was wrong, I thought I was right, but when he said that to me I really realized I was wrong and I made an effort not to yell, but I was seething and I still didn't know what to do but at least I was conscious of my yelling...

> I started taking the kids out on weekends, and I started having them home at night -- I always liked the kids, but I always felt the need for teacher separation, but I started to be more friendly with the kids in less of a teacher way, and I also started to think some of the things that used to be important weren't so important anymore, like the paper had to be laid out in exactly the right way was one of the things, as long as it was neat it was OK, and I praised them more for things, and I tried to individualize more, like in spelling because it was the easiest to start with, and then the kids got the feeling that I was trying to do things for them, and I read some stories to the kids I never had before, and I started some projects, but not a whole lot, and a lot of what I did started to get through...

This kind of experimenting and learning continued:

> ...the work they did getting to the product (with projects) maybe was valuable, but they never ended up with a decent product... I had two little kids paint the wall for me, I picked the wrong kids, they had no artistic ability and they spilled paint a lot, and one of the kids turned around and said to me 'what do I do?', and I said to myself; 'isn't this dumb, she would know what to do if she were home, what do you do, you go to the sink, you get the rag, and you clean up the paint, you don't have to ask me what do you do'...a lot of the kids did things that were non-thinking, they didn't think...And then I tried to get kids to do things for themselves, not for me...Individually I gave the kids some choices, I did contracts for a while, but that's just a little much for thirty-eight kids and one teacher...
>
> One of the things I didn't do in my second year that I did in my first year was to put the kids at tables. I didn't do it because I thought it was supposed to look like this, but that didn't work. But that was a step in setting, instead of me standing in front then I moved, I had to move to teach, and I think all the individualized reading materials really helped with the groups...

This process is exemplified in differing degrees by all the teachers. This teacher made contact with someone who had a more informal classroom, tried some of these approaches, and eventually developed an alternative program with another teacher. There is the feeling of experimenting, of trying things, of reaching towards kids, of trial and error, of frustrations and good times and more frustrations, and of persistence. Even when these teachers describe horrendous years and major frustrations, they describe their perseverance in finding a better way. They did not give up.

Throughout these interviews teachers give examples of certain character traits that fostered their individualized approach. Each of these teachers seemed to have honed in on a concern and caring for children, progressively developed as they experienced teaching. One teacher expressed in directly:

> So, I started out, what you would call a formal teacher in a certain sense, where I thought more about, say, the materials that I had to relay rather than the kids, but I had one year I think, as I got more comfortable with it, I was able to look at the kids...

First years of teaching seem to have been devoted to the mechanics of teaching. As they became more comfortable with the mechanics of teaching and began focussing on the children, the need to change became greater. In some cases, however, there was a more immediate focus on the children, developing from their teacher training experiences. Throughout the interviews, one gets the sense of a greater and greater concentration on learning about children and creating from that a more individualized and personalized classroom.

Along with this is evidence of willingness to change. These teachers seem to be able to look at themselves with great insight, and to seriously question what they do in the classroom. Experiences in classrooms are more than one year repeated many times. They are constantly struggling with new ideas, new techniques, new toughts. They are learning from others. One teacher expressed it this way when giving advice to a new teacher:

> ...don't hesitate to -- don't always hesitate to question what you are doing.

Another teacher expressed a constant theme running through the interviews, explaining how she questions her own teaching at the beginning of the year:

> I think every year I kind of go through, am I going to put out too much and then it is going to be confusing (in choice time) or not enough and then they are going to be wandering...I always think I could have done it better or done this or that...

Constant reflection on one's teaching, on activities, on kids, and on daily happenings is an important part of these teachers lives. There is an openness into looking at themselves and their classrooms realistically, of being objective and critical when necessary:

> We have three groups and I would rather have two groups, but there's not enough room, and our activity group is a disaster, because we don't feed into it enough...

They are constant learners:

> You really have to be a learner yourself in order to be (a good teacher)...

In addition to a questioning attitude about their own teaching, objectivity, and a willingness to admit problems, see mistakes and learn from experience, many of these teachers expressed a love for and an obsession with teaching. Their focus on their classrooms and children extended well beyond the teaching day into other parts of their lives:

> I think I am kind of a fanatic. My husband thinks I am. I go home and I usually spend at least two hours after I have gone home planning for the next day and making things. Sometimes on the weekends I go to the teachers centers and make things. I really love my job and enjoy teaching...

Two teachers told how they had made all of the furniture in their room and how they meet before the beginning of the school year for many days discussing and planning the year. Other teachers expressed the same kind of committment to their teaching. It is this continual thinking about teaching, this obsession with teaching, and this love of teaching that characterizes these teachers.

These teachers are also persistent in the face of many difficulties. One teacher, whose class did not know how to cooperate with each other, spent the entire year patiently, cooly developing problem-solving approaches and helping relationships. There were times when she wanted to throw in the towel, but the goal was too important, so she persisted. Other teachers expressed frustrations when working with one child who did not seem to make progress, yet they persisted in the face of this difficulty, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. They seemed to be able to tolerate frustrations and difficulties and pursue long range goals, such as changing classroom patterns or helping individual children.

There are a great many outside pressures that cause frustrations and require persistent independence. Sometimes the teachers are forced to adapt to the pressures. One teacher described how she was forced to include a structured reading time in her daily schedule:

> It kind of depends again (what to plan) on the way the class structures itself, the kinds of teaching in the public school -- you are confined, you have to teach th- levels. We have to have a reading time. Our principal says you have to have it...

Another teacher indicated that pressures of testing was a serious problem:

> The amount and frequency of the testing leave you very little room to do things and it is as if suddenly you are turning everything around, kids are not competitive and then in a test situation they feel competitive. They know right away they are being judged by a standard other than their own self...I think that testing is a very serious problem.

Still another teacher describes how the curriculum guides, the reading approaches, the principal, the parents at one time or another pressure teachers to change their approach, and how she had to decide when to change because of the pressures (when she felt it would do little harm to her approach) and when she had to educate, persuade, and stand up for what she believed in. One teacher was forced to transfer from one school to another for what she believed in:

> The principal came in and was hysterical and she wanted me to stop. She came in the day that I was absent and she threw out all of the stuff that I had accumulated in the closet. I started to accumulate bits of junk that the kids could use for different things and boxes and whatever. She got rid of it. I put in for a transfer.

> I went up and talked to another principal that I knew and she requested me and I guess that the third year I was teaching I was able to transfer to another school...

This type of independence and belief and confidence in yourself is important for a successful classroom in the face of many persistent pressures to conform and to change. As one teacher put it, individualized teaching requires self-reliance:

> I realized that you do a lot on your own, you can't count on too much help from outside people. They may not agree with your philosophy and they may just do more harm than good...You really have to become very self-reliant and develop your own way of handling problems...

Paradoxically, however, these teachers also searched for support from wherever they could find it. In some cases it meant searching out other teachers in the same school who had similar ideas. In other cases it meant developing an alternative classroom within the school, but in a separate building. Still other teachers found support within teacher centers in the school district, or within federally funded models that came to their schools or with university graduate teacher education programs. All of these teachers seemed to be able to find some support.

Pressures such as these and others lead to a strong need for support, and these teachers search to find it. The support enables them to continue, but there is a strong feeling that they would continue, with or without the support, that they would find some way to develop the kind of program they want, because it is so important to them:

> That is not so much a style as a philosophy that kids have to be treated as individuals and teachers also have styles within an approach -- there are a lot of different teaching styles...

They are aided by their own self-reliance and by the support that they are able to find from others.

Summary, Implications and Conclusions

Observation of these teachers, classrooms, coupled with these interviews, suggest several important thoughts and ideas common to teachers who individualize and personalize learning in their classrooms. First, these are goal-oriented teachers. These teachers focus on a set of goals that give committment and meaning to what they do in the classroom. There is a clarity of purpose, focussing on personal adequacy, self-expression, academic achievement, independence and interdependence. Clarity of purpose allows these teachers to develop long range as well as short range plans for implementing these goals. The goals are tempered and developed by these teacher's ability to observe and analyze their classrooms and their students in many different ways, so that they are able to develop a picture of their students and their needs. Thus, one teacher may focus more on personal adequacy and interdependence than another because he or she perceives that these are more serious problem areas for students. Another teacher may concentrate more heavily on self-expression. Goals become priorities because a teacher's clinical observations leads him or her to believe that they are important areas to stress with their children. The priorities may change with different children.

Second, there is a focus on meeting the individual needs of children, and clear perceptions on how to do this. These teachers were concerned with such factors as getting to know a child's interests and abilities, giving children choices, having children work at individual rates, developing creativity, fostering independent work and experiential

learning, involving children in the learning experience, and the like. They had developed complex ways to create individualized and personalized classrooms.

For example, they focussed on continual clinical analysis of their students. Initially, at the beginning of the year, they organized their classrooms so as to maximize their ability to learn about their students, both cognitively and psychologically. They carefully watched and listened to their students, keeping records of their accumulated information. As they progressed in knowledge, their observations continued, providing continual feedback on learning and problems. They indicated a concern with the whole person, intertwining cognitive and psychological concerns. Multiple formal and informal measures of performance were used to assess students so that teachers were continually examining children's written and oral work, and finding ways to continually monitor the work that children were doing through individual and group discussions and dialogue. They were continually on the watch for clues that would help them to evaluate as well as motivate and interest their students in learning.

Also, they were able to create complex classroom organizations over time that fostered individualized and personalized learning. The daily schedule provided an array of activities and types of organization that allowed for maximum growth over time. Schedules generally allowed for informal discussions, choice times, group work, informal reading and writing activities, projects and the like. Multiple types of activities were included, some of which involved choice on the part of the learner and some of which were obligatory for the student. There was a focus on

changing and developing complex classroom patterns over time, allowing students to gradually accustom themselves to new types of learning. Continual analysis of students, activities, interests, and so on were used in short range and long range planning, allowing for changing goals and patterns of interaction.

Flexible patterns of thoughts and behaviors were common to the interviewed teachers. Their analysis shifted, focussing on different students and suggesting different models of behavior to handle different types of students. Individual children were discussed in depth. Teachers were attuned to students feelings about themselves and developed patterns of behavior and classroom life to develop self-esteem. The concern was to motivate and involve students in learning and to provide them with successful learning experiences. Discipline was part and parcel of the approach to learning. Teachers developed explicit, carefully defined rules early in the year and insisted that they be adhered to. Fairness, tempered with individual circumstances, were the principles used for disciplinary action. The teachers focussed on logical and appropriate consequences for misbehavior. "Keeping one's cool" and solving problems together were also important. In all, flexible thinking and behavior towards students were important components.

Also important were appropriate standards and expectations. Based on their cognitive analysis and psychological understanding, these teachers seemed to be able to develop divergent expectations and standards for different children. Some children need firmness, while others need flexibility. Classroom situations may change minute by minute as well as daily and weekly, leading to differing actions. Expectations

and standards designed to lead to successful learning and enhanced self-esteem were important for these teachers, but they did not seem to confuse permissiveness with a child-centered approach to classroom teaching and learning, nor individualization with allowing children to do what they want. They monitored and observed constantly, intervening when it seemed appropriate. One teacher spoke about the way he learned to psychologically prepare children so that they would feel they were successful at their work, and they achieved significantly higher scores on their math achievement tests.

Third, an implication drawn from both the interviews and from observing their classrooms is that these teachers are characterized by a high degree of personal growth and development. Many times they indicated frustration with what was happening in their classrooms and in the world around them (with respect to their professional lives), but they also showed an unusual degree of persistence and self-reliance. They sought out support for their efforts, and even developed special programs or transferred to other schools when they felt their committment to their students was being violated. They continually learned from their experiences, changing and growing as they taught. They indicated a high degree of cognitive flexibility and sophisticated conceptual understanding, seemingly derived from their gradual accumulation of learning and experience from many different sources. They reflected a number of traits that Abraham Maslow suggests are part of a growth stage of development called "self actualization" -- indicating greater psychological health.[6] The focus of their energies was on their classrooms and on their teaching. They exhibit such self actualization characteristics as:

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6. See Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, Second Edition. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

1. Superior perception of reality. Self actualized people are more able to "see concealed and confused realities more swiftly and more correctly than others"[7]. They seem to be able to judge other people more quickly and more correctly. They seem to be able to analyze situations according to objective circumstances more often. These teachers exhibit such characteristics in their ability to quickly and accurately judge their students, those whom they work with, and the situations around them.

2. Increased acceptance of self and others. There is a greater acceptance of their own and other's personalities with all their faults, frailties and shortcomings. They tend to lack defensiveness and live well with their own shortcomings, although they do concern themselves with frailties and faults that they see as improvable. These teachers accept their students with all their problems and faults (as well as their own problems and faults) but regard the circumstances of their student's lives as improvable. They are constantly striving to find ways to improve their teaching and the achievements of their students through their individualized, personalized approach.

3. Problem-centered. Self-actualized people tend to focus on problems outside themselves. They work within a framework of values and principles. These teachers focus on goals and ideas with regard to their teaching, and work on long range plans to implement those goals. They are most often problem-centered with respect to their classrooms, focusing their energies on problems and issues with respect to their students and classrooms.

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7. Ibid., p. 153.

4. Detachment. Self-actualized people are able to detach themselves from others, to be more independent, more self-reliant. As we have seen, these teachers are able to organize and get things done with respect to their classrooms. They are self-movers, organizing their classrooms in unique ways according to their beliefs and ideas.

5. Feelings for mankind. Self-actualized people have a deep feeling of identification, sympathy and affection for others and a deep desire to help others. These teachers, in their thoughts and ideas, indicate a deep seated identification, caring and concern for all their students, which is the reason for their focus on meeting the needs of all their students.

6. A democratic character structure. They have deep seated character structure that enables them to diminish their authority and act accordingly with others. They relate to all people as if their have dignity and worth. They diverse talent, personalities, and varieties of differences among people. These teachers have the ability to reduce and diminish their authority and allow others to become independent and take responsibility. They are concerned with fairness and justice in their dealings with others, as indicated by their thoughts on discipline.

7. Creativeness. These teachers seem to be able to look at things in new and different ways, to see things from fresh perspectives. They are able to use their experience and knowledge to create unique and interesting forms of learning and growing for their students. They are constantly analyzing and reanalyzing and creating new forms of classroom living.

These seven characteristics were common to these teachers in their approaches and attitudes to classroom life. These individuals have seemingly overcome other needs, such as belongingness and love needs, safety and security needs, and self-esteem needs[8] so that they can direct their energies towards growth and change. They have used their experience to create better organized classrooms that seem to be more able to meet the needs of children. They have developed themselves and their teaching over time, and seem comfortable with their development, although striving to improve at the same time.

They have appeared to grow into highly adequate, competent teachers whose continual focus is on meeting the needs of individual children and arriving at their goals. They live with frustrations, but are persistent in the face of problems. They seek out support. They develop complex classrooms and complex interaction patterns over time, basing what they do on their perceptions of the needs of the children they work with. They can be caring yet firm, demanding yet loving, spontaneous yet planned, focussed yet diffused. They can be flexible when flexibility is called for, and firm when firmness is demanded. Their central focus seems to be on many goals at the same time, among them creating a psychological climate that will lead these students to greater psychological self-esteem which they believe have important implications for learning. They seem to be all eyes and ears in the classroom, listening, watching, observing, learning over time.

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8. Ibid., pp. 35-47

This analysis has important implications for teacher assessment and teacher training. It implies that teaching successful individualized and personalized classrooms requires a developmental process requiring:

1. clarity of, and committment to, a number of goals, including the need to individualize and personalize learning;

2. knowledge of diverse activities and methods to organize and plan for complex classrooms;

3. A focus on the continual clinical analysis of children, including their cognitive and psychological abilities, interests, problems, and the like;

4. The use of flexible behaviors and interactions based on these analyses, and a concern with performance in evaluating children;

5. the development of "appropriate" expectations and standards based on analysis of children's needs;

6. the continual accumulation of knowledge and ideas, leading to a developmental approach to learning, to complex changing classroom organization, and to complex changing interaction patterns;

7. A personality open to new experiences, flexibility in thought and practice, learning from and using experience, and exhibiting higher order shapes of personal growth.

If these are important traits, then our teacher training institutions interested in successful individualized, personalized classrooms need to make a more concentrated effort to focus on these areas. We need to help teachers see that teaching is a developmental process, and that learning and growing are part of the process. We need to help them clarify their

own goals and learn skills that help them focus on individual children. Their experiences should reflect the same individualized, personalized model desirable for their students. Emphasis should be placed on psychological understanding and growth as well as on methods for teaching. Ways of dealing with one's frustrations, of being persistent, of finding support should be included in a teacher training program. Emphasis should also be on learning multi-faced ways to evaluate and monitor children's learning and progress through their performance.

Finally, I believe more systematic in depth research is needed with many different kinds of teachers using many different styles of teaching. This study is admittedly only a beginning with highly tentative conclusions. We need to understand in some depth and detail how teachers with different goals and styles practice the teaching craft and what they think about teaching and learning. We need more efforts to understand how different types of students affect classroom life.[9] Studies should also include the thinking of students, and perhaps some comprehensive measures can be devised to evaluate children's growth from many different perspectives, based on the goals of the teachers. Such studies will help us to develop a better understanding of teaching-learning processes in all its variety. It is an important human enterprise in need of careful scrutiny and in-depth study.

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9. A beginning effort in this regard has been made by J. E. Brophy and C. M. Evertson, Learning From Teaching: A Developmental Perspective. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976.

Interview Questions*

1. We use the terms "individualized, personalized" learning to describe what you generally do in your classroom. What does individualized, personalized learning mean to you? Do you agree you are an individualized, personalized teacher? Why or why not?

2. What was your first year of teaching like? Where was it? What did you do? What were some of your problems? How did you solve them?

3. When did you begin to individualize and personalize learning in your classroom? Why did you do it? What problems did you encounter?

4. What are your teaching goals? What do you hope your students will accomplish through your teaching?

5. What do you do the first two weeks of school? (go into some detail). What do you do the first day? What do you do the last few weeks of school?

6. What are some of the most important teaching decisions you make each day? Each week? month? year? Describe in some detail decisions you made? Describe some decisions you made yesterday in your teaching.

7. What would be an "ideal" teaching day for you? What would it look like? What would happen? What would you plan to do next?

8. What kinds of problems do you face with students? (Discuss some areas such as curriculum problems, discipline problems, physical problems, environmental problems).

9. How do you organize your room? Why? (discuss materials, kids and scheduling).

10. What are some typical daily activities in your classroom? Describe them in some detail.

11. Describe one aspect of your program (example: reading-language arts) that you consider to be the "best" example of an individualized, personalized program.

12. Describe some of the most important things you do in a classroom when you work directly with children.

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* Not every question was asked to each interviewee. When a question was answered as part of another question, it was not directly included in the interview. Sometimes questions were adapted in light of special circumstances and time constraints.

13. What techniques do you use to "manage" an individualized, personalized program?

14. What do you do for an hour of your day? Describe one hour of your day in some detail.

15. Talk about one child, and how you've dealt with that child over time.

16. In a classroom, what should be the responsibility of teachers? Children? Make two lists in your mind and discuss their relationship.

17. When do you think about your teaching? How often? What do you think about when you think about your teaching?

18. How do you plan your teaching? What types of plans do you generally develop? What resources or facilities do you generally take advantage of in your planning?

19. What factors in your past do you think contributed to your teaching style?

20. What do you do to improve teaching and learning in your classroom?

21. Name the five best books you have read on education? Why do you think these are the best?

22. Were there certain people that strongly influenced you in your teacher training? In your teaching? What were they like? In what ways are their influence demonstrated in your teaching?

23. Complete the following: Children....
Schools.....